

APPENDIX

SECTION VI.

THE BRIDGER BOYS.

John and James Bridger were slain by Indians during the last raid made by Indians in what is now Pocahontas County. They were in the party that came to the relief of the Drinnon family on the Greenbrier River, nearly a mile above the mouth of Stony Creek. Henry Baker was killed while he and Richard Hill were going to the river to wash and prepare for breakfast. Nathan, a colored man belonging to Lawrence Drinnon, notified the settlers in the Levels. A party came on and on their return the Moore and the Waddell families joined them. The Bridger brothers and Nathan left the main party and took across to the near way through the Notch, while the rest passed around by the Waddell's.

Indians were concealed at a place where a clump of lynn saplings were growing out of the decaying stump of a tree that had been cut down for sugar troughs. Two shots were fired in quick succession. John fell mortally wounded. The other, being untouched, ran on through the "notch," closely pursued by an Indian. Just at the foot of the mountain was a straight path

through which the young man was running when the Indian paused and shot him in the back. The mark of the Indian's heel was seen where he halted to deliver the fatal discharge.

Nathan had stopped to fasten his moccasins, and was thus out of reach. He scolded the Indians for hurting the boys, and escaped unhurt. The rest of the company were at the Waddell place when they heard the shooting.

Shortly after the shooting, loud whoops were heard near the Notch. These seemed answered by whoops on the Gillilan Mountain, and then were whoopings heard near the head of Stamping Creek, as if the savage bands were signaling to that the settlers were on the move and danger was threatening, so soon all became silent and nothing more was seen or heard of them in the vicinity. By the time the refugees reached the fort, on the hill now occupied by Isaac McNeel's residence, all danger was over.

Arrangements were quickly made to bring in the slain. John Cochran had brought a "half sled" to the fort and an old, gentle horse. The sled was taken to where Jim Bridger lay weltering in his blood, and he remained there until John was carried down from the Notch, and thus they were borne to the fort and a grave prepared for them on the knoll overlooking Millpoint.

Old Mother Jordan, who lived when a young person where Mathew John McNeel now lives, remembered how Jim Bridger was fixing himself up like he was going to a wedding while the men were getting ready

to go to the relief of the Drinnons. He wanted to borrow her silver shoe buckles, and she objected: "Jim, you had better not take my shoe buckles, for the Indians might get you and I will never see my buckles any more."

Aunt Phoebe McNeel and Mrs Sally McCollam, daughter of Larry Drennan, remembered with emotion long as they lived how the heart broken father of the Bridger boys put his arms around the necks of his slain sons ere they were put into the one grave. His sleeves were all bloody, and when the men gently forced him away from his dead, and he lay upon the ground resting his head on one arm and wiping his tears with the bloody sleeve of the other, it looked so pitiful.

This should always be remembered as a consecrated spot, being made sacred by the tears of a father wept over sons cruelly slain, incidental to the perils and hardships of the early settlement of Pocahontas.